

309 Yoakum Parkway #601
Alexandria, Virginia 22304
09 December 1984

Dear Mom and Dad,

I enjoyed talking to you last night. Your package was in the mail this morning and although I haven't opened it yet, I probably will before Christmas. If I send you something it is because I ran across an irresistible purchase in the Underground; not because I feel the need to reciprocate! Today was clear and milder, in the 40's, and a pleasure to go outside. We went for our ten mile run around the Seminary near Braddock Road. Then I made Johnny Cake, a cornmeal bread, for brunch. I need to update my security clearance so I am filling out a form which requires, among other items, a complete list of foreign travel. You can imagine how much work that is! We have been rather busy the last few weeks. The job change is quite a mental strain and I am glad it is over. Everything has gone well as I explained over the phone. By the way, this letter is being written using the word processing program Word Star and will be typed on our printer which we acquired as part of the computer package. We like the computer and Vickie has been studying it quite a bit. Having two disk drives makes it very easy to create backup disks which is difficult on a single drive system. Our package included two word processing programs, two spreadsheets, and a data base management program. When I get a chance I'll show you examples of each. Before I left CNA I made copies of Fortran and Pascal which may be of use to me in future classes at George Washington University. I am planning to take Artificial Intelligence in the Spring term which begins in January. It essentially is Lisp programming; something our La Jolla office is using for some contracts. Thus the company president, Dan Alspach, will be pleased to pay for my course!

Vickie and I went to the Cantina D'Italia after my first day to celebrate the new job. She came up to the office and had a chance to meet the president and vice-president who were in town for some meetings. They are both about my age and very easy going. We had not been to the Cantina for many years and enjoyed the food and atmosphere. We had tri-colored pasta to start and then rockfish stuffed with shrimp, mussels, and clams. The food was excellent.

Our cultural life has been rather full as well. I returned from Yuma on 21 October and since then we have seen King Lear at the Folger, The Tempest at Arena Stage, The Merry Widow at the Kennedy Center, and the Taming of the Shrew at Hartke Theatre. We have also seen two movies: Swann in Love, and Amadeus which I believe Mary would enjoy.

I wish we could join you for Christmas, but at least I am glad that Mary, Mike, and Diane are with you. I will stop for now and get back to my personal history form. Now that our computer setup is complete I should be able to write more frequently.

Love, Jim

P.S. I forgot to show you some of the special printing features such as **BOLDFACE** and underline. The system will handle subscripts and superscripts and does proportional printing to right justify the lines. All unnecessary, but fun to play with!